

REMARKS**Status of the Claims**

Upon entry of the amendment above, claims 11-56 will be pending, claims 11, 27, 31, 49, 54, 55, and 56 being independent.

Summary of the Office Action

Claims 11-53 are rejected under the judicially created doctrine of obviousness-type double patenting with regard to claims 1-21 of U.S. Patent No. 6,467,195.

Response to the Office Action**A. Withdrawal of Rejection**

In Applicants' reply filed on February 23, 2004, a terminal disclaimer was attached for the purpose of effecting the withdrawal of the obviousness-type double patenting rejection, the terminal disclaimer disclaiming the terminal portion of the full term of any patent granted on the instant application, and providing that such patent will remain commonly owned with U.S. Patent No. 6,467,195.

The terminal disclaimer was signed by Mr. Pascal Joan of the assignee Salomon S.A., who declares, in the final paragraph of the terminal disclaimer (on page 2 thereof) that he is empowered to act on behalf of the assignee.

Applicants request that the rejection be withdrawn in view of the filing of the terminal disclaimer.

As mentioned in the previous reply, Applicants note that their filing of the terminal disclaimer is not to be regarded as an acquiescence to the Examiner's position, *i.e.*, although the terminal disclaimer is being filed for the purpose of advancing the application to allowance.

B. Amended and New Claims

In the amendment above, claim 30 has been amended by changing an occurrence of "elements" to "element" for a grammatical reason (*i.e.*, "an ... element" rather than "an ... elements").

In addition, independent claims 54, 55, and 56 have been added. Independent claim 54 is identical to independent claim 11 except that claim 54 specifies that the gripping device is arranged on the linkage rather than that the gripping device is arranged on the linkage in the area of the loop. However, Applicants submit that claim 54 patentably defines their invention over the documents of record, including HANSEN, at least for reasons of record.

New independent claim 55 includes the subject matter of new claim 54 with the addition of the subject matter of claim 12.

New independent claim 56 includes the subject matter of new claim 54 with the addition of the subject matter of claim 16.

SUMMARY AND CONCLUSION

The ground of rejection advanced in the Office action has been addressed and has been overcome. Accordingly, withdrawal of the rejection is requested.

In addition, the newly added claims are believed to patentably define the invention and, therefore, the allowance of such claims is kindly requested.

A check is enclosed for payment of a claim fee. No additional fee is believed to be due at this time. However, the Commissioner is authorized to charge any fee required for acceptance of this reply as timely and complete to Deposit Account No. 19-0089.

Further, although no extension of time is believed to be necessary at this time, if it were to be found that an extension of time were necessary to render this response timely and/or complete, Applicants request an extension of time under 37 CFR §1.136(a) in the necessary increment(s) of month(s) to render this reply timely and/or complete and the Commissioner is authorized to charge any necessary extension of time fee under 37 CFR §1.17 to Deposit Account No. 19-0089.

Any comments or questions concerning this application can be directed to the undersigned at the telephone or fax number given below.

Respectfully submitted,
Guy AZAM et al.



James L. Rowland
Reg. No. 32,674

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GREENBLUM & BERNSTEIN, P.L.C.
1950 Roland Clarke Place
Reston, VA 20191

(703) 716-1191 (telephone)
(703) 716-1180 (fax)